

VISIT...

LANZAROTE
Caliente.COM

Academic Art of Riding



Marijke de Jong

EBOOK VERSION 2.2

Download this eBook on <http://www.academic-art-of-riding.com>

Translation by Ylvie Fros

WEBSITE

Discover more free information, videos and articles on:

<http://www.academicartofriding.com>

<http://www.youtube.com/user/straightnesstraining>

<http://twitter.com/RidingAcademy>

IMPORTANT NOTICE

You are allowed to distribute this eBook for free.

However, you are only allowed to distribute this eBook in this format. It is not allowed to change the format and/or content or to use the information of this eBook in any other way.

You can publish this eBook on your website or distribute it among the members of your mailing list.

DISCLAIMER

While composing this eBook, the greatest care was put in the correctness of the information. However, Marijke de Jong cannot be held responsible for any information that might be incorrect in this eBook. Marijke de Jong does not take liability for potential damage that may occur as a consequence of incorrect or incomplete information in this eBook or as a consequence of incorrect translation. It is very important that you seek professional assistance when you have no or little experience with the Academic art of riding.

Introduction

Horseback riding according to the academic art of riding is something that, because of the name, seems only for elite dressage riders. But nothing is further from the truth, since all horses and ponies; untrained, experienced or even with a problematic background, can be schooled following the method of the academic art of riding.

The goal of the gymnastic education within the academic art of riding is for the rider to reach a perfect harmony with his or her horse. Well thought-through gymnastic exercises make the horse able to perform as a riding horse until a very high age. The horse is trained according to his possibilities and talents, both physically and mentally.

The education of the horse starts with work in hand and longeing using a cavesson. During the academic training, we work towards riding all side-movements, and if possible pirouettes, canter-changes and piaffe, during which the rider rides one-handed. These exercises are the foundation for the true art: The High School. Because of the logically structured exercises, the rider trains him/herself and the horse towards a level that is comfortable for both.

What are the benefits of the academic art of riding for you and your horse?

- You will learn to train within a logical system of well thought-through gymnastic exercises and you will develop yourself to become the personal fitness trainer of your horse.
- You will be able to develop your horse from a horse with (riding) problems towards a soft, cooperative riding horse.
- You will get more insight in how riding problems are created, and learn to fix and prevent these problems. Because of the clear structured system, you will always have a good basic work to fall back on and to help you find the solutions to whatever riding problems you might encounter.
- With the academic art of riding basics as physiotherapy, you can reduce and prevent back problems and strain injuries in your horse.
- And from that you can take it another step forward: You can develop your horse's talents to their maximum.
- Your horse will develop physically: it will become more supple and easier to maneuver, it will become stronger and will reach more bending in its hindquarter/haunches, and will be easier and lighter to collect.
- Your horse will develop mentally: it will become stronger, more self-assured and will scare less easily. Your horse will become more loyal and affectionate towards you, and will show less resistance and stress.

Is this what you are looking for? Then start reading this document in which the steps of the academic art of riding will be revealed and explained to you.

Enjoy reading!

Marijke de Jong



INDEX

1. Preparing the young horse	6
2. Saddle & rider	8
3. Groundwork.....	10
4. Longeing	12
5. Getting used to the rider	14
6. Riding	16
7. Straightness training	18
8. Shoulder in	20
9. Quarter in	22
10. Renvers	24
11 Half pass	26
12. Pirouette.....	28
13. Flying Change.....	30
14. Piaffe	32
15. Passage	36
16. Levade	38
17. Terre á terre	40
18. Jumps above the ground	42

1. PREPARING THE YOUNG HORSE

A horse's life starts as a foal. It will then take a few years before we can start schooling the horse following the academic art of riding. In the meantime, we will let the youngster grow up among other horses and we will prepare it for its life among people and its future as a riding horse.

Within two hours after it is born, a foal will learn the instinctive skills it needs as a prey animal: to be able to flee. It is important that a newborn foal finds a positive contact with people within these two hours after birth, to make sure these positive impressions are forever printed in its memory.



In the first two weeks of its life, the young horse develops his senses: his hearing, smell, taste, touch and his vision. Therefore it is very important in these first two weeks to expose mare and foal to different surroundings. A rich and varied environment increases the youngster's senses and will make it less scared in the future.

During the first six months, the youngster should mainly learn to be a horse. It is important to leave the foal grow up among other horses. This way, the youngster will learn horse language and social behaviors in the herd. Also, growing up with other youngsters is important. This way the youngster can play with other foals, one- and two-year-olds. This is beneficial for the development of bones, tendons and the general physical development.



It is very important that the young horse learns to behave calmly and gently in his relationship with people. He should also develop proper manners and learn to respect behavioral rules set by us, humans. It is strongly recommended to first teach a young horse using structured training (groundwork, bodywork, stress & obstacle training, trailer training):

- The youngster should first learn to wear a halter, to be led by the halter and to stand while tied to the halter. Through leading the horse by its halter, you can demonstrate your leadership in a friendly way.
- The horse must learn to let itself be touched everywhere. This is important in case of emergencies when a veterinary must examine the horse. Also, the horse should learn to lift its feet gently and to stand still patiently during grooming.



- It is recommended to get your horse used to numerous 'scary' things such as umbrella's, anti-fly spray, the washing area, wheelbarrows, machines, traffic and other things. This will help avoid stress and dangerous situations when you take your horse into traffic, to competitions or other places.



It is convenient to get your horse used to sprays. Your horse will probably try to walk away the first time you use a (anti-fly) spray. Keep on spraying and calmly walk with your horse, until it stops walking. Then stop spraying and reward your horse. Next time you will have no trouble using a spray.

- You can teach a horse to place its feet properly by making him step over cavallettis, over boards, tarps or through a puddle of water. This helps improve coordination and awareness of its legs.
- It is also important to take time to teach your horse to go into a trailer and stay in calmly.

When the horse is about three years old, it will be trained to accept the saddle and rider. You will learn more about this in the following chapter.

2. SADDLE & RIDER

It is wise to prepare the horse in a step-by-step approach to carry a saddle and a rider. In nature, predators jump on the horse from above, exactly where the saddle is placed on the back and where the rider will sit.

Following the next steps, you can make sure that your horse is accustomed to the saddle and rider in a calm way, and prevent panic and flight reactions.



Step 1. Work in freedom

This step makes the horse see you as a leader. It makes the horse pay attention to you, feel safe and relaxed and respect your space. These are the ideal circumstances to make the horse used to saddle and rider. Work in freedom is done in an enclosure of 15 by 15 meters (about 50 feet by 50 feet). Through body language, you can control both tempo and direction of the horse, which will result in a horse that follows you out of free will.



Step 2: Bodywork

Then you will touch the horse over his entire body to enhance his body awareness. Touch with your hands the back and belly of the horse simultaneously. This will prevent the horse from over reacting when you touch him later on with saddle and girth.



Step 3: Girth preparation

With a scarf you can then give a little pressure on the place where the saddle and girth will be placed later on. If the horse becomes uneasy and starts to walk: keep the pressure, breath out and calm him with a low and gentle voice, until the horse is calm again. Then you can release the pressure. Repeat this a couple times. This will teach the horse to stand still when he feels pressure instead of walking away from it. Also, let the girth dangle against its legs gently, so that the horse will not be spooked if this ever happens accidentally.

**Step 4: Saddle blanket**

Let the horse sniff the saddle blanket and then approach the horse from both sides carrying the blanket. Then, let it slide from its neck onto its back.

**Step 5: Bare back pad**

Then you can put a bare back pad on your horse's back. Do not throw the girth over your horse's back, but gently lower it on the right side. The moment your horse breathes out, you can tighten the girth one hole at a time. Then, work your horse in freedom again, so he can become accustomed to the pad, and let his tension out through moving.

**Step 6: Saddle**

Then you can place the saddle on without stirrups. Thanks to the calm preparations, your horse will accept saddle and girth without problems.

**Step 7: Stirrups**

Finally, you can hang the stirrups to the saddle and start working in freedom again. When the horse starts to trot, the stirrups will move and touch its body. The horse is then likely to show an instinctive response, but the fight- or flight behavior is likely to disappear quickly the moment the horse discovers the stirrups do not harm him.

Step 8: Bit

Besides getting accustomed to the saddle, the horse will also need to become accustomed to the bit. By putting the bit in the horse's mouth a few times with some goodies, the horse will get used to the bit in his mouth. The first few times, just put the bit in and then take it out. When the horse accepts the bit easily, you can keep the bit in during training sessions.

When the horse is accustomed to both saddle and bit, it is time to prepare the horse to the carrying of a rider. This is done by both work in hand and longeing. In the next chapters, you can read more about these techniques.

3. GROUNDWORK

Groundwork makes the horse obey and cooperate with the rider. With groundwork exercises, the horse learns to respond to the aids and it develops proper muscles. This prepares the horse for longeing and riding. Groundwork is done using a cavesson and a lead rope or longeing line. The line is attached to the middle ring of the cavesson. In this way, the young horse is easy to control, without harming/disturbing the mouth.



1. Leading

The horse needs to follow you as its leader. You walk in front of the horse, slightly to the side (so you can keep an eye on your horse). The horse follows you based on respect and trust. When the horse tries to pass you or stops, you should change directions immediately. When your horse is pushy and gets into your personal space, you can create space by using the end of your rope as a tail and move it from side to side.



2. Stop

When you stop, the horse should make the same movement and stop as well. In the end, you should be able to do this exercise with your back turned towards the horse. If your horse does not stop immediately it is recommended to first stop while facing the horse while keeping 2 or 3 meters (7 to 10 feet) distance between you. Then make yourself bigger and if necessary lift your arms.



3. Back up

Put some pressure on the nose and chest of the horse and ask it to step backwards. If the horse moves away from the pressure, release and reward your horse. The goal is to be able to give pressure without even touching the horse so that it moves backwards, away from your energy. This exercise is good for your hierarchy: a horse lower in hierarchy moves away from you or horses higher in rank.



4. Forward Down

In nature, a higher position of head and neck is linked to mental excitement while a forward down tendency is visible in relaxed horses. In this position (with the head down), the horse cannot make adrenaline. Ask the horse to move away from a slight pressure behind the ears. If the horse lowers the head you remove the pressure and reward your horse.



5. "Stelling"

Stelling is a Dutch word, used to describe the bending of the head and neck to the left or right in relation to the spine. The lower jaw of the horse should move underneath the extensions of the atlas vertebra, the first vertebra in the neck of the horse. A proper stelling creates therefore a bigger space behind the lower jaw. You can ask stelling bit by bit, while the horse should remain standing. If the horse takes the stelling and relaxes, you release pressure as well. You can then see that the stelling continues to work throughout the rest of the body in a bending of the spine, making the inner hip come forward.



6. Bending

Every horse has from nature a supple and a less supple side, because the muscles are uneven in length. To develop the horse symmetrically, you should ask the horse to walk circles to both left and right. You ask the horse to take some stelling, which makes the muscles on the outside lengthen and the muscles on the inside relax. At the same time, you ask the horse to bring his head forward down, to relax the back muscles and tighten the abdominal muscles.



7. Stepping under

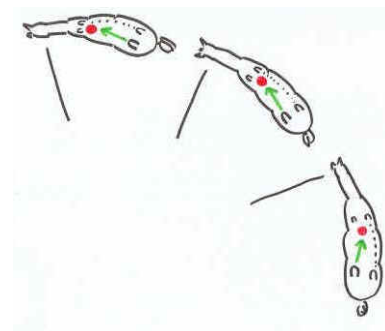
Because of the horse's natural asymmetry, the horse prefers using one hind leg to push, and the other hind leg to carry. When the horse takes a proper bending to both sides, it will also start using its inside hind leg as the carrying hind leg. In this way, both hind legs develop similar carrying capacity. This is how the horse learns to step under his point of weight, which is important for supporting the rider.

The horse has now learned to walk in a forward down tendency, bend itself to the left and right and to step under its point of weight. This is when the longeing work can start.

More about longeing in the next chapter.



4. LONGEING

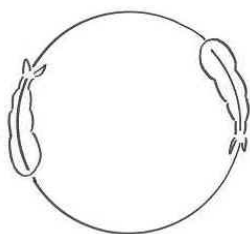


It is important to spend a lot of time doing longeing exercises before riding your horse. Those who invest this extra time in longeing in the first few months of training will be rewarded throughout the horse's education. Like a rough diamond that first needs to be polished, the young horse first needs to be "supplied up" on the longe. In this time the horse can build up its fitness, develop its muscles and find balance in all gaits.

THREE ELEMENTS

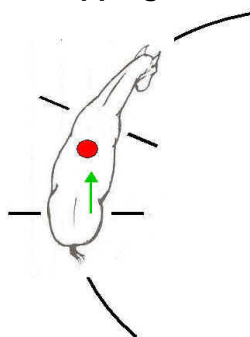
On both sides of its body, the horse is asked to bend in laterally, to step under the point of weight and to move forward down. You will have made a big step forward in the education of the horse when the young horse has learned these three elements on the longe:

1. Lateral bending



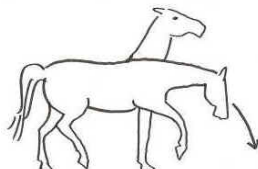
The horse on the circle must bend evenly in its spine. When the horse has found the proper lateral bending, the circle will be perfectly round.

2. Stepping under



With a correct bending of the body, the inside hip will come forward, thus making the inside leg move forward under the point of weight.

3. Forward down



When the horse bends laterally, the back muscles are relaxed. This makes the horse lower its head and the neck is relaxed, forward down.

When these elements are integrated, the horse moves balanced and in the correct and relaxed self-carrying posture. This makes the use of additional reins unnecessary.

THE AIDS



Cavesson

The young horse is longed using the cavesson (photo) and a single line. The horse should not be longed using the bit, because this can cause the horse to tilt its head. Also, the bit gives too many signals in the horse's mouth.

Longe

Through the longe line you can ask the horse to take some stelling by making half-halts with your hand. By lowering the line you can invite the horse to lower his head in a forward down position. Raising the longe line will have a braking effect.

Whip

By asking stelling and using the whip the moment the inside hind leg comes forward; you will create a lateral bending in the horse. By pointing the whip to the shoulder you can prevent the horse from falling to the inside.

Body language

With your body language you can make the horse speed up or slow down. By making yourself taller you can activate the horse, by making yourself smaller and breathing out you will slow the horse down.

Voice

The voice is used to reward the horse ("FINE/GOOD") and the condition the horse to the commands such as "WALK", "TROT" and "WHOOA" When the horse responds well to vocal commands, it is easier to teach the horse the riding aids later on.



The combination of a raised longe line, the inside shoulder turned towards the horse and a vocal command ("WHOOA/EASY") makes the horse slow down.



The combination of a lowered longe line, an open inside shoulder and a vocal command ("WALK/TROT") makes the horse speed up.

While longeing the horse should learn the following exercises:

- Basic transitions such as walk-trot, trot-canter
- Speeding up and slowing down within a gait
- Stop
- Transitions such as stop-trot, canter-walk
- Changing the lead through the circle (by making a S over the middle)

Longe frequently with the saddle. When the horse has mastered all these exercises and gained better fitness and muscles, the riding training can then begin.

5. GETTING USED TO THE RIDER

Through the steps as described in chapters 1-4, the horse has learned to willingly cooperate with the rider and developed muscles and balance. The horse is now strong enough to carry the rider.

Because of the extensive preparations, it is now only a small step to get the horse used to the weight of the rider. Getting the horse used to the rider can be done in a few steps; always taking the next step only after the horse has become completely confident and relaxed in the previous step,



Step 1: Lean on the back

The first step is to get the horse used to pressure on its back. First, the rider should jump a few times up and down next to the horse while resting his hands on the back of the horse. If the horse stays standing calmly, the rider should get a leg up to lean over the horse's back.



Step 2: Hang over the horse's back

The second step is to hang over the horse's back. The horse is saddled with a bare back pad. This is soft for the rider and if the horse spooks the rider can slide off easily. During the hanging over the horse, the horse can be touched all over its body to get used to unexpected touching.



Step 3: Hang over the horse while moving

It is a big change for the horse to carry weight. By walking short distances with the horse in hand while a second person hangs over it, the horse will move easier with weight. The rider moves arms and legs to get the horse used to unexpected movements.



Step 4: Sit on a standing horse

Then, the rider slides his leg calmly over the back of the horse and sits while bended forward over the neck of the horse. This way the back of the horse does not get the full pressure right away and the rider can still slide off easily when the horse becomes uneasy.

**Step 5: Sit up straight**

When the previous step has gone well, the rider can slowly sit up straight. The horse should also be rewarded frequently with goodies. This makes the horse chew and relax its jaws, which causes relaxation in its entire body.

**Step 6: Sit while moving**

The next day or some days after, the horse is asked to move by someone leading the horse from the ground. The rider should take a light seat (supported on upper legs to lighten the pressure on the back muscles of the horse). Around the neck of the horse you can hang a neck rope on which the rider can hold on without disturbing the horse's head.

**Step 7: Riding with saddle**

The horse is already used to the saddle (chapter 2) therefore this is nothing new. Repeat the previous steps with saddle, in between the steps make the horse move without weight on its back so it can release its tension.

**Step 8: Carrying the rider**

Through groundwork (chapter 3), the horse has already learned to step under the point of weight with its inside hind leg. This can now help it carry the rider and keep its balance. With previous training with lateral bending, the horse is now prepared for step 9 in which it will have to walk without the same support on the circle.

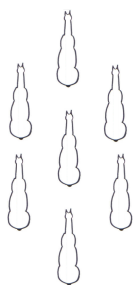
**Step 9: Longeing**

While longeing a horse with a rider on its back, it's the person longeing the horse who gives the horse the aids and decides the tempo. The only thing the rider should do is some gymnastics (moving arms and legs) so the horse does not spook from the rider.

**Step 10: Starting to ride**

As soon as the horse accepts the rider completely and is accustomed to the weight on its back, the horse is properly used to the rider. Now the riding can begin, in which the horse learns to take aids from the seat, legs and reins and learns to walk without longe. More on this in the next chapter.

6. RIDING



From nature, the horse is used to walk in a herd. The leading mare walks in front and decides the direction of the entire group. The stallion walks behind and decides on the tempo. Additionally, the horse reacts to the horses that walk to his left and right. To make it very simplistic: The horse stays behind the mare, in front of the stallion and between the other horses. In that position the horse can walk very confident and safe in the centre of the group. The horse is used to respond to others, that is why a horse lets itself be ridden so well, and a solitary animal like a moose does not.

'Herd of aids'

While riding the rider should take over the role of the surrounding horses: leading like the mare, deciding tempo like the stallion. The horses left and right in front of the horse are substituted by rein aids, through which the shoulders are guided. The horses to the left and right slightly behind the horse are substituted by the legs, guiding both hind legs of the horse. When training the horse for riding, the horse is taught to carry itself in a herd of seat, leg- and rein aids.

To take over the longeing aids

The person longeing the horse has taught the horse from the ground to make transitions and changes in tempo. The rider will take over these aids by giving seat, leg and rein aids. A horse will learn the new aids as following: For example, the horse has learned to go forward when the hand with the whip is lifted. The longeing person will give this familiar aid and the rider adds the new aid: slight pressure with the calves. When this is combined consistently, the horse will make the connection between the old and the new aid and will eventually respond to the new aid as well, without the old aid from the longeing. At first, reins should be attached to the cavesson so the mouth of the horse is not disturbed.



Step 1: On the circle

Through legs, reins and seat the rider and the longeing person get the horse used to the aids to accelerate and slow down.



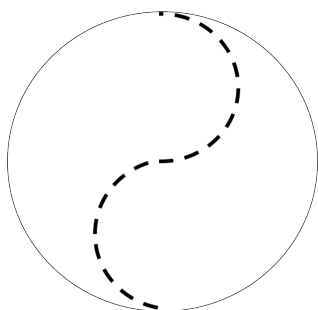
Step 2: Make the circle bigger

By making the circle bigger, the horse learns to understand and combine the inside rein and inside leg of the rider.



Step 3: Make the circle smaller

Then the horse learns to understand outside rein and outside leg by making the circle smaller.



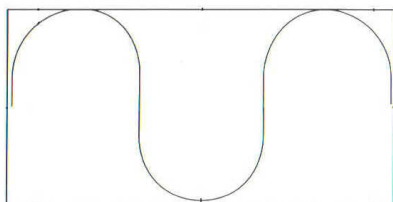
Step 4: Changing the lead through the circle

When the horse allows the outside aids to make the circle smaller, the horse can be asked to change the lead through the centre of the circle.



Step 5: Riding through the entire arena

By making the circle bigger and bigger, the rider can start to ride through the entire arena. When the horse finds it difficult or hard to do for a long time, this can be alternated with circles.



Step 6: Serpentes

The serpentines are very important to make the horse supple in the bendings and responsive to the aids of the rider.



Step 7: Take away the longe

In the end, the longeing person will no longer give any aids to support the horse. Then the longe can be taken off. The rider should repeat all steps 1-6 with the longeing person first walking with the horse through the exercises. The longeing person should then take more distance gradually.

During one of the following training sessions, the bit should be added (a curb in the academic art of riding). The horse is ridden with 2 reins: 1 attached to the cavesson and 1 (first just hanging loose) attached to the bit. This way the horse can get used to the bit and the weight of the reins on the bit.

When the horse lets himself be led by the aids of the rider, more advanced riding training can start.

7. STRAIGHTNESS TRAINING

The horse is systematically trained to build up muscles using a set of logically structured dressage exercises during its training as a riding horse. The straightness training is to be incorporated throughout the entire education of the riding horse.

Natural crookedness

Like every human the horse is left or right handed. Every horse is therefore crooked (asymmetrical) from nature and bends more easily to one side than the other. The horse has a convex and a concave side and it does not place its shoulders straight in front of its hips. One hind leg usually has more backwards push from nature, while the other one has more of a forward grab and is therefore more carrying. If a rider does not correct this crookedness it can lead to problems in the horse.



Hollow (concave) side:
short, stiff, strong muscles

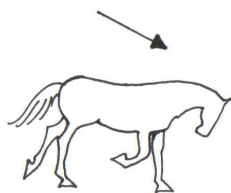
Rechtsgebogenes pferd



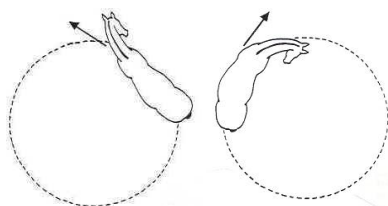
Elongated (convex) side:
long, supple, weak muscles

Linksgebogenes pferd

Natural balance



All horses carry from nature about $\frac{3}{5}$ th of their weight on the front legs and $\frac{2}{5}$ th on the hind legs. This balance is easy for grazing, because it causes an automatic locomotion. Both front legs do not carry the same amount of weight however, due to the difference in push and carrying capacity of the hind legs. The carrying hind leg is suppler and steps easier under the point of weight. The pushing hind leg is straighter and stiff and can make a powerful backwards push. This pushes more weight on one front leg than on the other, and added with the weight of the rider this can lead to strain injuries.



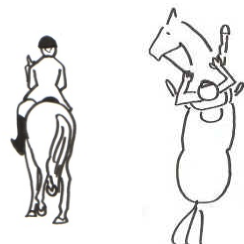
on the shoulder over the shoulder

Consequences on the circle

A horse that is not corrected for its natural crookedness and the natural balance, will fall on the inside shoulder or over the outside shoulder.

Consequences on a straight line

The horse walks with his shoulders not straight in front of its hips. When riding an uncorrected horse along the wall of the riding arena this effect is enhanced, because the shoulders are also narrower than the hips.



Symptoms:

- Unequal pressure in the reins
- No suppleness/giving in the reins
- 'Taking' the bit
- Heavy in the hand
- Tilting the head
- Headshaking
- Grinding the teeth
- No stretching of the neck forward-down
- Counter canter
- Lateral walk or canter
- Does not stop with the weight equally divided on all 4 feet
- Cannot back up in a straight line
- Can do the exercise to one side, but not to the other
- Alertness
- Speeding up
- Prancing
- Slow/stolid
- Rider cannot sit in trot
- Little shoulder freedom
- No pure tact
- Irregularities/crippleness
- Strike
- Bucking, rearing

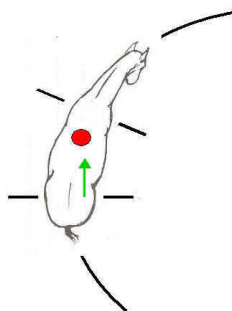
Straightness training

To prevent the consequences and symptoms the horse will be trained using straightness training. Straightness training is made up of exercises to bend the horse so that it becomes supple and flexible on both sides, and to make both hind legs equally strong. Straightness training consists of diverse exercises such as circles, serpentines, shoulder in, quarter in, renvers and half-pass.

The exercises shoulder in and quarter in are the foundations of straightness training.

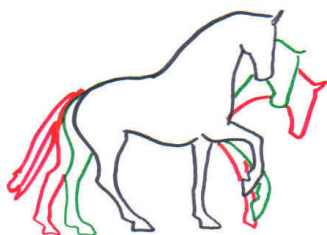
The shoulder in activates the inside hind leg to carry, and the quarter in does the same with the outside hind leg.

Both exercises demand a correct lateral bending, in which the inside and outside hind leg need to step under the point of weight to take some weight off the front legs.

From natural crookedness to a straight horse

Natural crookedness is a muscular problem that can be corrected by proper training. A straight horse:

- Can bend equally to the left and to the right
- Can do all exercises to the left and to the right
- Can push and carry equally in both hind legs
- Is prepared for collection.

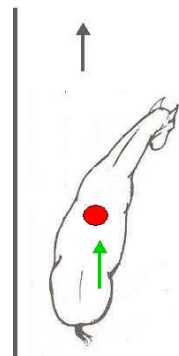
From a natural balance to a riding balance

Only a straight horse can let itself be collected. The goal of the academic art of riding is to maximize the carrying capacity of the hind legs to take weight off the front legs. This way the horse is able to carry the rider properly. Finally, 3/5th of the weight needs to be carried on the hind legs to create a riding balance. The straightness training is the basic training to prepare the horse for this goal.

8. SHOULDER IN

In the academic art of riding, the horse is strengthened through logical gymnastic exercises. In this set of exercises, the shoulder in is an important exercise the horse should learn.

Definition



In Shoulder in, the horse walks in a forward-sideward movement, in which the body is bended laterally from neck to tail. Shoulder in is a side movement on three or four tracks.

- In competitions the shoulder in is done in 3 tracks. The inside front leg walks in one track, the inside hind leg and outside front leg walk on one track and the outside hind leg walks on one track.
- In the classical art of riding the shoulder-in is also done on 4 tracks. In this exercise the horse bends even further making both front legs walk on two different inside tracks.

History

Shoulder-in was invented by the Duke of Newcastle (1658) and was in those days done on the circle. The grand master Robichon de la Guérinière (1733) performed the exercise ("L'Epaule en dedans" in French) on the straight line. Other masters in history named the exercise the "corner stone" of dressage, "pillar" of the art of riding, "mother" of all exercises and even the "aspirin" of riding, because the exercise was supposed to solve all riding problems.

Goal



The goal of shoulder in is to teach the horse to step under the point of weight with its inside hind leg. The benefit of the exercise lies in the increased bending of the inside hind leg and the increase of shoulder freedom in the outside shoulder, because the outside shoulder is supported by the inside hind leg. By stretching the outer back muscles it increases the will to accept and soften in the outer rein. The shoulder in has great value because it counters the natural crookedness and makes the horses equally supple to the left and right.

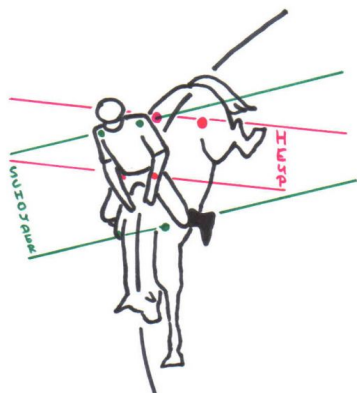
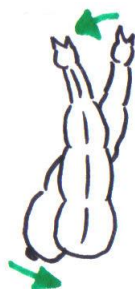
Teaching the exercise to the horse



In the academic art of riding, all side movements are first taught to the horse in hand. This teaches the horse to move in side movements and find its balance without the additional weight of the rider. Later on, the horse will find it easier to learn and execute the same exercise under the rider. At first, a few steps are enough. When the horse gradually becomes stronger a whole long side of the riding arena can be done in shoulder in.

The aids

The rider guides the horse in shoulder in mainly using the inside leg and outside rein, the so-called "versal" aids.



- The outer rein lies against the neck and guides the shoulder inwards.
- The inside leg of the rider is on the girth, asks the lateral bending of the horse and gives a little aid the moment the inside hind leg steps forward to make it step under the weight.
- The inside rein is away from the neck and asks the stelling.
- The outside leg of the rider is behind the girth, maintains the lateral bending and prevents the hindquarter to fall out.
- The rider puts more weight on the inside seat bone, to take pressure away from the stretched outer back muscles.
- The inside seat bone points down to where the horse should step with his inside hind leg.
- The rider's centre and point of weight is deep in the rider's pelvis, pointing straight forward like a compass giving direction to the movement to prevent the horse from turning to the inside.
- The rider keeps his shoulders parallel to the shoulders of the horse, and his hips parallel to the hips of the horse.

Variations

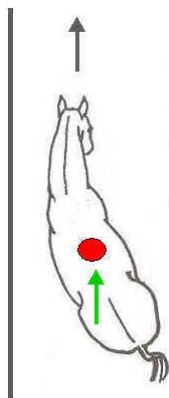
- Shoulder in can be ridden on the straight line along the wall of the arena, but also in a circle
- To test whether the horse is properly responding to the outside rein and is not falling on the inside shoulder, halfway through the long side a little circle can be added to the exercise.
- By making a shoulder in in every corner of the arena, the horse is prevented from "cutting the corners".
- The exercise can be done in walk, trot and finally also in canter. Especially when doing straightness training in canter, the shoulder in is extremely valuable.
- To prepare for the shoulder in, the horse can be ridden in a small circle or through a corner. This will help get the proper lateral bending for the exercise.
- The exercise can be ended by making a circle or by placing the shoulders back in front of the hips.

9. QUARTER IN

The exercise “hindquarter in”, also called travers, is the second most important corner stone in the academic art of riding.

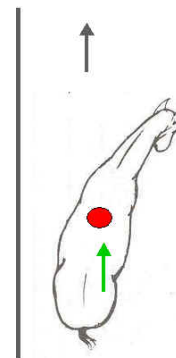
Definition

The hindquarter in is a side movement on three or four tracks. The shoulders follow the track along the wall and the hindquarter is bended inwards. In this exercise, the horse is bended laterally from neck to tail. The outside hind leg is stepping under the weight.



Shoulder in and hindquarter-in are closely related exercises that complement each other very well:

- In shoulder in, the inside hind leg steps under the point of weight. In hindquarter-in, it is the outside hind leg stepping under the point of weight.
- In shoulder in, the shoulders are turned inwards. In the hindquarter-in, the hindquarter is bended inwards.
- In shoulder in, the inside hind legs step in front of the outside legs. In hindquarter-in, the outside legs (front and hind) step in front of the inside legs.
- In hindquarter-in, the horse is looking in the direction it is going. In shoulder in, the horse looks inwards while moving straight forward.



Goal



The goal of hindquarter-in is to teach the horse to step with his outside hind leg under the point of weight. The benefit is that this hind leg is required to bend more. Hindquarter-in encourages the outside hind leg to carry and makes the inside shoulder more light. The exercise increases the lateral bending and improves coordination of the limbs.

Hindquarter-in is a good preparation for pirouette, half-pass and canter changes:

- When the hindquarter-in is carried out on a smaller circle a pirouette is the end result.
- When the hindquarter-in is carried out on a diagonal line, this is called the half-pass.
- When the horse in canter changes from renvers to the left to hindquarter-in to the right, this is a canter change.

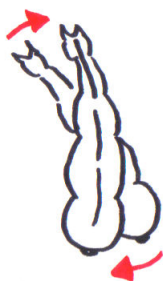
Teaching the exercise to the horse



Hindquarter-in can only arise from a perfect shoulder in. This last exercise should therefore first be comfortable to the horse, before teaching the hindquarter-in. Hindquarter-in is first trained in hand before riding. As preparation, a small circle can be done to get the required lateral bending. In first instance, a few steps should be enough and when the horse gets stronger this can be built up towards an entire long side of the arena.

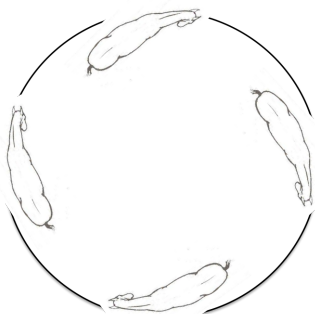
The aids

The rider guides the horse in hindquarter-in mainly using the outside leg and inside rein, the so-called "traversal" aids.



- The outer rein lies against the neck and guides the shoulder inwards.
- The inside rein keeps the stelling of the horse and guides the shoulders over the track along the wall.
- The outside leg of the rider is behind the girth and gives a little aid the moment the horse lifts the outside leg to bring it in under the point of weight.
- The inside leg of the rider lies on the girth and maintains the lateral bending.
- The outside rein allows the amount of bending in the horse.
- The rider puts more weight on the inside seat bone, to take pressure away from the stretched outer back muscles.
- The point of weight of the rider, located in the riders' pelvis, moves toward the inside front leg of the horse.
- The rider keeps his shoulders parallel to the horse's shoulders and his hips parallel to the hips of the horse.

Variations



- Hindquarter-in can be ridden on the straight line along the wall, through curves, and also in a circle
- The exercise can be done in walk, trot and finally also canter.
- When riding in a circle, the collection of the horse can be improved through this exercise, because the hind legs take shorter steps and take more weight.
- Fluent transitions from shoulder in to hindquarter-in improve coordination and suppleness of the horse and the response to the aids.

History

Hindquarter-in is already mentioned by Salomon de la Broue (1600) and François Robichon de la Guérinière (1733). Both gentlemen had some doubts about this exercise.

Guérinière states that the horse, with its head next to the wall, will move more automatically forward-sideward than move between the riders' aids. When the wall is then removed, the horse will not respond as well because the horse is used to the support the wall provided.

De la Broue has the same opinion and recommend the hindquarter-in only for horses that are heavy in the hand, but in a way that there is always 1.5 meter between the horse and the wall. Both gentlemen recommended the renvers rather than hindquarter-in. More on this exercise in the next chapter.

10. RENVERS

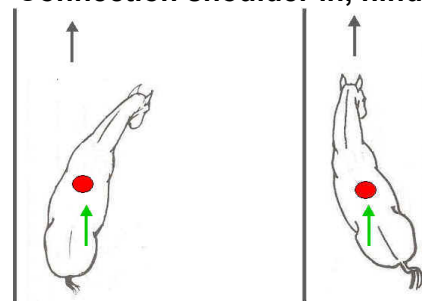
Definition

Renvers is in fact the mirror-exercise of the hindquarter-in and has the exact same gymnastic effect.



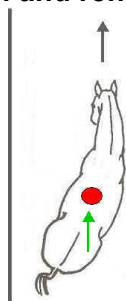
Renvers is a side movement on three or four tracks in which the horse looks where it is going. In this exercise, the horse is also bended laterally from neck to tail. The outside hind leg is stepping under the weight. The hindquarter walks on the track along the wall, the shoulders on the inside track. This is in contrast to the hindquarter-in where the shoulders follow the wall and the hindquarter walks on the inside track.

Connection shoulder in, hindquarter-in and renvers



Schouderbinnenwaarts

Travers

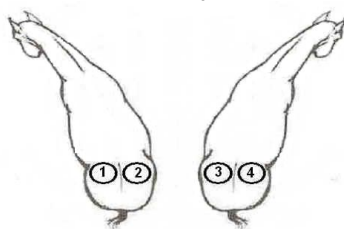


Renvers

In shoulder in, the inside hind leg steps under the point of weight. In hindquarter-in and renvers, it is the outside hind leg that steps under the point of weight. By changing the bending from back to front from the shoulder in, the horse is bended into the renvers. By changing the bending from front to back in hindquarter-in, the horse is bended into renvers.

Four hind legs

By riding shoulder in to the left and to the right, the horse is asked to step with the inside hind leg under the point of weight. By riding hindquarter-in and renvers to the left and right, the horse is asked to step under with the outside hind leg. That means that the horse actually has four functions in his hind legs that are trained by these exercises:



- 1 Left hind leg as inside hind leg
- 2 Right hind leg as outside hind leg
- 3 Left hind leg as outside hind leg
- 4 Right hind leg as inside hind leg



Goal renvers

Renvers has the same gymnastic effect as hindquarter-in. In hindquarter-in, in which the head of the horse is moving along the wall, the horse can walk forward-sideward automatically instead of following the rider's aids. In renvers, the horse is not supported by the wall and has to follow the riders' aids in order to carry out this exercise on its own legs.

Teaching the exercise to the horse



The renvers is first taught in-hand, then riding. As a preparation to this exercise, the rider should ask shoulder-in. Then the rider asks the horse to change the bending and this leads to the renvers. At the beginning, a few steps should be enough and when the horse gets stronger this can be built up towards an entire long side of the arena.

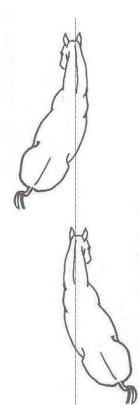
The aids

For riding the renvers to the right the following aids are used:

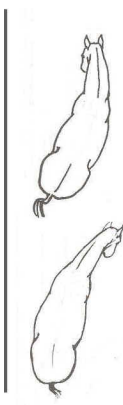
- As a preparation to this exercise, the rider should ask shoulder-in on 4 tracks. The rider sits in a so-called 'right seat', meaning that the rider has more weight on his right seat bone, with his right leg on the girth and the left leg behind the girth.
- The right rein is away from the neck and the left rein is against the neck of the horse.
- Then the rider changes his seat from a right seat to a left seat to change the bending of the horse.
- In the left seat, the rider puts more weight on his left seat bone and his left leg is on the girth.
- The right leg is behind the girth and keeps the hindquarter along close to the wall.
- The left rein asks for new stelling, keeps the shoulders on the second track and then relaxes. The right rein controls the extent of stelling and keeps the horse straight since there is no wall to guide the horse on that side.

Variations

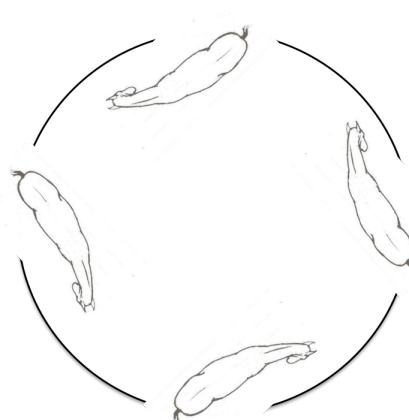
The exercise can be done in walk, trot and finally also in canter.



Transitions from hindquarter-in to renvers in walk and trot prepare the horse for the canter change.



Fluent transitions from shoulder-in to renvers improve balance, coordination and suppleness as well as the reaction of the horse to the aids.

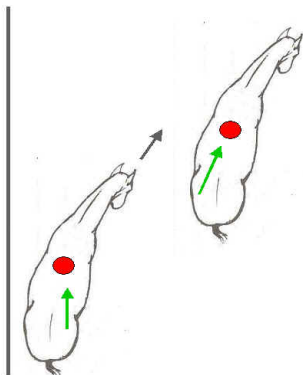


Renvers can be ridden on the straight line along the wall, through curves and in a circle.

The old grandmasters used to ride renvers on a circle and gradually decrease the size of that circle until a turn around the shoulders was done. This way they managed to ride canter pirouettes in renvers.

11 HALF PASS

Definition



When doing a half-pass, the horse moves diagonally in a lateral bending, in a forward-sideward manner and looks in the direction it is going. During the half-pass, the horse steps under with its inside and outside hind legs alternated. The outside legs step in front and over the inside legs.

The horse in both carrying moments:

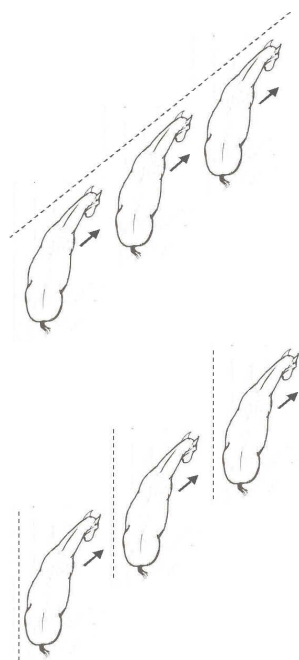


1. The outside hind leg steps to the point of weight.



2. The inside hind leg steps to the point of weight.

Connection shoulder in, hindquarter-in and half-pass



Doing a half-pass is the same as hindquarter-in, except that the exercise is not done along the wall but on the diagonal. This requires that the horse carries itself as the wall no longer supports the horse. Imagine that the wall is on the diagonal and ride hindquarter-in along that imaginary wall. This will result in the half-pass.

In the half-pass the shoulders should always lead, meaning they are always in front of the hindquarter. During every moment of the half-pass, the horse should be able to continue in a straight line in shoulder-in. Then you are sure the horse has had the right shape during the half-pass. For horses that still lack some strength and lose their balance quickly, it is recommended to alternate half-pass with shoulder-in on a straight line.



Teaching the exercise to the horse

One can only start with half-pass when the exercises shoulder-in and hindquarter-in are properly taught to the horse. It is first taught in hand, and then in riding. At the beginning, a few steps should be enough. When the horse gets stronger, this can be built up towards an entire diagonal. The exercise can be done in walk, trot and finally also in collected canter.

Aids

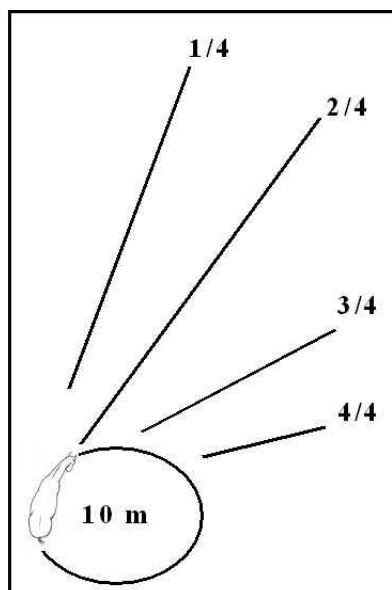
As preparation to the exercise, the rider rides a circle to the right or a shoulder-in to the right. The rider then moves his point of weight towards the diagonal and asks the outside hind leg to step under the point of weight. The aids are similar to the hindquarter-in:

- The outer rein lies against the neck and guides the shoulder inwards.
- The inside rein keeps the stelling of the horse.



- The outside leg of the rider is behind the girth and gives a little aid the moment the horse lifts the outside leg to bring it in under the point of weight.
- The inside leg of the rider lies on the girth and maintains the lateral bending.
- The outside rein allows the amount of bending in the horse.
- The rider puts more weight on the inside seat bone to take pressure away from the stretched outer back muscles.
- The point of weight of the rider, located in the riders pelvis, moves toward the inside front leg of the horse.
- The rider keeps his shoulders parallel to the horse's shoulders and his hips parallel to the hips of the horse.
- The rider looks between the ears of the horse in the direction in which they are going.

Variations



- The $\frac{1}{4}$ half-pass leads to the middle of the short side and the horse is less bended in this exercise. The horse goes more forwards than sideward.
- In the $\frac{1}{2}$ half-pass the horse has a similar bending as on a 10 meter circle. The horse goes as much forward as it goes sideward, thus having equal pushing and carrying capacity in his hind legs.
- In the $\frac{3}{4}$ half-pass the horse is more bended and moves to the centre of the long side. The horse goes more sideward than forwards.
- In a complete half-pass the horse has maximum bending and steps sideward. A little bit of forwards should be maintained so that the outer legs can continue to step in front of the inside legs.
- It is recommended to practice all variations and not to limit yourself to just 1 variation.

12. PIROUETTE

History

The pirouette was used in the times of man-to-man fights to make the horse turn on the place. This way, the rider could prevent being attacked from behind by staying face-to-face with his opponent. Mastering pirouettes was therefore important to survive in battle. In the baroque period, riding became an art and the skills of horse and rider were demonstrated in the pirouette.

Definition

The pirouette is the smallest hindquarter-in circle. The hind legs stay in the centre of the circle and the shoulders make a larger circle. This way the pirouette is a turn around the hindquarter.



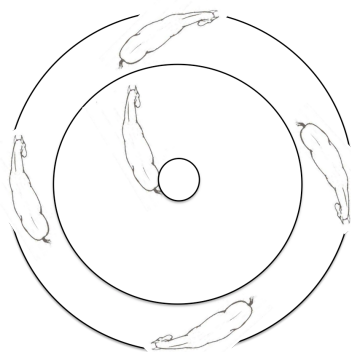
The horse remains equally bended through the spine from the neck to the tail during this exercise. The bending is in the direction of the movement.

The hind legs move over a smaller surface than the front legs. This makes the hind legs bend more and enables the horse to collect. The pirouette can be ridden in walk, trot, canter, piaffe and in terre à terre. There are $\frac{1}{4}$, $\frac{1}{2}$ and complete pirouettes.

The canter pirouette is done in two, three, four or eight canter jumps. The pirouette in the academic art of riding is done in eight jumps that correspond to the eight geometrical directions of the arena.

Developing the canter pirouette

1. Make a circle smaller in hindquarter-in



Ride hindquarter-in on a circle and make this circle smaller. In this exercise, it will become very clear when the strength and the mental limits of the horse are reached.

The circle should not be made smaller than the horse can do. When the horse can canter controlled and collected it can be asked to make the circle smaller in hindquarter-in.

At first just ask a few steps, reward the horse and make the circle bigger again.

2. Carré in hindquarter-in with $\frac{1}{4}$ pirouettes

A carré is a square circle on two tracks. The rider rides hindquarter-in and in every corner of the square he makes $\frac{1}{4}$ pirouette (90° turn). In total, the rider rides 4 time $\frac{1}{4}$ pirouettes, making a full pirouette in 4 phases. First practice in walk and then in collected canter.



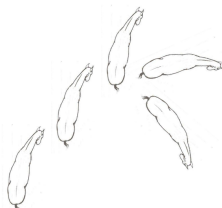
Carré

3. Turn in walk



A turn is a 180° turn around the hindquarter in walk along the wall and is also called a half walk pirouette. It is important that the rider decides the number of steps and not the horse. It is also important to keep the lateral bending.

4. Half-pass with half a pirouette



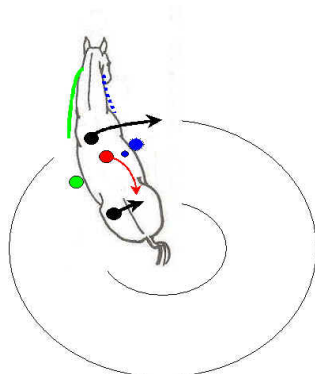
When the horse has learned to do the half-pass in canter on both leads correctly, then the strength in his hindquarter will be developed enough and the horse will be capable to do ½ pirouettes during the half-pass.

5. Full pirouette

When the horse is able to do ¼ and ½ pirouettes properly, the pirouette can be expanded to ¾ pirouettes and finally the horse will both physically and mentally be able to do a full 360° turn.

Aids

The canter pirouette requires a perfect set of forward sending aids, sideward leading outside aids, and inside aids:



- The outside rein leads the outside shoulder in the turn. The outside rein is not allowed to pull back and reduce bending.
- The outside leg of the rider brings the outside hind leg in under the point of weight.
- The point of weight is moved backwards and to the inside with the upper body of the rider, putting more weight on the inside hind leg and freeing the shoulders.
- The inside seat bone, inside rein and inside leg keep the lateral bending.

If the horse wants to turn its shoulders too quickly, the inside rein can stop that movement. If the shoulders turn too slowly, the outside rein should guide the shoulders in more clearly. When the hindquarter is not bending enough, the outside leg of the rider should ask the outside hind leg to come further under the point of weight. When the horse throws itself through the turn, the inside leg of the rider can prevent it. In the end, the horse should learn to only react on the turning of the rider's upper body and stay between the aids.

13. FLYING CHANGE

By nature, the canter is the gait in which the horse runs away from danger. In dressage, the canter is used to show controlled exercises such as the canter change.

Canter is a three beat gait but it also has a moment in which all 4 legs of the horse are in the air. There is a left- and a right-canter. In the right canter, the right pair of legs comes further forward while in the left canter, the left pair of legs comes more forward.

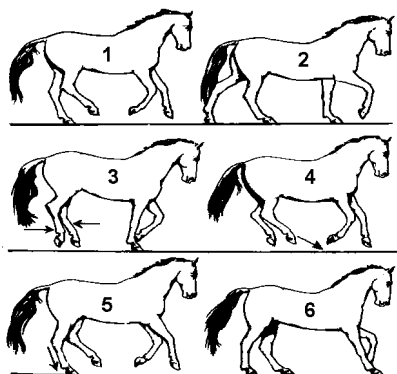


In the right canter the legs are lifted and put down in the following order:

- Left hind leg
- The diagonal pair: right hind leg + left front leg at the same time
- Right front leg
- All legs in the air

Canter change

In a flying canter change the horse changes the canter from right to left or vice versa in the moment when all legs are in the air. This is the best moment for the horse to change the canter.



In the drawing the horse changes from the right canter to the left:

- In phase 1, 2 and 3, the horse is in right canter.
- In phase 4, the canter change is taking place in which the horse changes position of all 4 legs and the right hind leg is coming forward.
- In phase 5, the horse jumps with the right hind leg in the left canter.

Preparation

If you have never ridden a canter change before, make sure you find an experienced horse to learn it on. The canter change is a normal canter jump and feels so, if done right. After mastering this feeling, you can teach it to your own horse. Your horse is ready to learn the canter change when it is trained into straightness and can bend equally on both sides. It is important for the rider to place the position of the shoulders and hips precisely in canter. Therefore, the exercises shoulder-in and hindquarter-in have to be understood very well by the horse before the canter change can be practiced.

The following exercises can be used to prepare:

1. Canter from walk

When the horse can jump into canter easily from trot, the horse can be taught to jump into canter from walk.

2. Transition canter to walk

The transition from canter to walk increases the ability to collect. It is therefore important in this exercise to keep the energy going up-hill.

3. Tempo changes in canter

It is important for the rider to carry a precise tempo in canter. Ride the horse in a circle, collect the horse on the outside hind leg (hindquarter-in style) and make the steps longer by riding the inside hind leg forward under the point of weight.

4. Renvers-canter (counter canter)

Renvers canter improves the straightness and the balance of the horse. Ride the horse slightly into a renvers in walk and jump into renvers canter.

5. Transition from renvers to hindquarter-in in walk

Make transitions in walk on a straight line, from hindquarter-in to renvers. This trains the horse to keep placing the other outside hind leg under the point of weight.

6. Simple change

Make a transition from canter to walk. Change the bending in three to five steps and jump into the other canter. The number of steps in walk can be reduced in time to one step. Make whole transitions and halts shorter and shorter. Finally, the horse will already change the canter at a half halt (actually, this is disobedience from the horse since it does not wait for the rider's aids, but in first instance it should be rewarded. Later on, the horse should learn to distinguish between a canter-halt transition and a canter-halt- canter change transition).

By bending the horse from a slight renvers to slight hindquarter-in in the flight moment, the flying change is done.

Aids

The following aids are given simultaneously during the flight-moment:

- The new inside leg is placed on the girth.
- The new inside rein and the new inside leg help maintain the new bending around the inner seat bone and inside leg of the rider.
- The new outside leg is placed behind the girth and moves the outside hind leg under the point of weight (like in hindquarter-in).
- The rider looks over the new inside shoulder forward.
- Do not forget to reward and stop when the change happens for the first time, to print the positive experience in the horse's mind.

Teaching the exercise to the horse

It is recommended to practice the change in the same place of the arena, until the change is confirmed. This fixed place should be on a straight line and not in a corner of the arena. Afterwards, you can practice the change in other places in the arena.

Series

When the horse is taught to change on the rider's aids and responds with 100% accuracy, you can start teaching changes every six, four, three or two steps. The question is "whether the changes every other step are a classic exercise or not?" The exercise is from origin a circus exercise and was invented in the 19th century by Mr. Baucher. No matter what, it is very difficult and therefore impressive when a rider and horse can do this exercise effortless.

14. PIAFFE

Definition



Piaffe arises by collecting in trot. Piaffe is like a trot in place, with only one hoof print forward in every step. The horse is bending in its haunches, the hind legs step under the point weight and the horse's surface support becomes smaller. The pelvis is tilted, the back arches and the horse lifts its front.

Trot has two extremes: collection and extension. The highest collection is found in piaffe, the biggest extension is found in extended trot.

Piaf ←————→ Extended Trot

The extended trot is the trot with the longest strides. The more the rider goes towards piaffe, the more active, shorter and higher the steps.



Piaffe



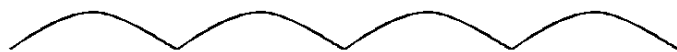
Half steps



Trot in collection



Trot



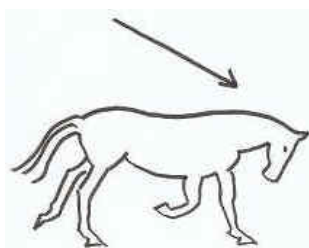
Middle trot



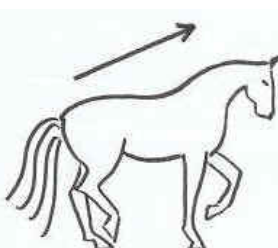
Extended trot

Goal

The goal of the art of riding is to develop the riding balance of a horse. Piaffe shifts the point of mass from the front legs to the hind legs. Therefore the shoulders become free.



*Natural balance:
weight on the front*

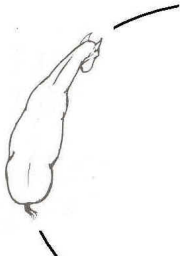


*Riding balance:
weight on the hindquarter*

Bending body & limbs

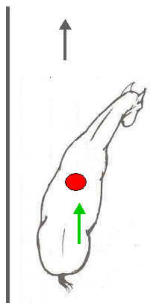
To collect a horse he has to be able to bend his body and his limbs:

Step 1: Bending the body



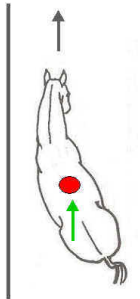
On the circle the horse learns to bend its body from head to tail.

Step 2: Bending inside hind leg



By using shoulder-in, the inside hind leg steps under the point of weight and gets more weight to carry. Because of the extra weight, it has to bend more.

Step 3: Bending outside hind leg



With the exercise hindquarter-in, the horse learns to make his outside hind leg step under the point of weight, to bend and to carry.

Step 4: Bending both hind legs



Piaffe makes both hind legs carry and bend.

Teaching the exercise to the horse



In the academic art of riding, the piaffe is usually first taught to the horse in hand, starting with half-steps.

You can achieve these “half steps” by collecting the horse more and more in trot. By halving these steps, the piaffe is then created.

When the horse shows a few proper steps during the first attempt, stop and reward the horse extensively. After this, the piaffe can be developed under the rider.

The rider collects the horse in trot and when the rider feels that the horse has reached its limits, the rider should ride forward again.

It will take some years before the horse is capable of perfect piaffes, but the way towards it already makes the horse stronger, more supple and better maneuverable.

Aids

Collection and a rising of the shoulders happens when the hind legs are stepping forward under the point of weight. This should be done with as little use of the rider's hand as possible:



- The inside leg of the rider asks the inside hind leg forward, the outside leg asks the outside hind leg forward. This makes both hind legs step towards the point of weight.
- The base of the tail can be touched with the whip to ask the horse to lower its pelvis.
- The rider opens his seat and upper legs to give the back space to come up. The rider should sit quietly.
- The rider tilts his pelvis to transfer weight to the hind legs.
- Half halts re-balance the horse onto the hindquarter.
- When the hind legs actually do step forward towards the point of weight, the rider will feel increasing lightness in his hands.

Variations

- In the academic art of riding, the piaffe is often done with a bending to the inside. The piaffe is right bended on the right lead, and left bended when going to the left. The straight piaffe is done on the center line.
- Shoulder-in and hindquarter-in in piaffe improve the bending in both hind legs separately.
- Transitions in tempo are valuable gymnastics.
- Transitions to- and from walk, trot and canter in piaffe improve all gaits. The piaffe makes the horse more bended in its hindquarter and provides more carrying in the gaits. And the gaits improve the piaffe:
 - Walks brings calmness into the piaffe.
 - Trot improves the correct placement of the diagonal legs into the piaffe.
 - Canter brings more uphill into the piaffe.
- The piaffe-pirouette is an exercise the horse can start to do when it can produce a long series of equal steps in piaffe.
- Work between pillars is another alternative in the Academic art of riding to develop the piaffe.

15. PASSAGE

Definition

Passage is a collected and rising trot movement with only a little forward and a long flight moment. The energy is directed upwards instead of forwards.

When done correctly, the upper legs of the horse are lifted horizontally. The carrying hind legs are taking a lot of weight and step and bend powerful forwards-upwards.

Connection piaffe and passage

Piaffe:

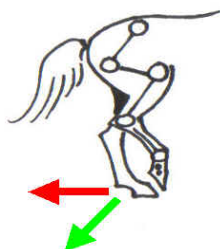


Passage:



In piaffe, it is only the carrying that is activated in the hindquarter. The horse moves almost in place. In passage, both the carrying and pushing are present in the hindquarter. The horse moves itself forward-upwards.

Carry and push



In piaffe, the horse brings its hind legs under his point of weight with bended, flexible and supple joints. The addition of some push leads to a transition into passage or extended trot. In passage, the push is aimed in a forward-upward direction (green arrow). In extended trot, the push is directed more backwards (red arrow).

Goal

In the old times, the passage was a king's exercise to carry the king gracefully and royally past his subjects. The horse has a proud and fierce expression in passage. Therefore, this gait was also used by officers to ride during inspections and parades.



In the academic art of riding, the passage is not an absolute goal. It provides the means to develop the horse and has some benefits for the education:

- The muscles of the back and hindquarter are made stronger and suppler.
- The shoulders are placed correctly in front of the hips.
- The focus and obedience of the horse to the aids increases.

The passage is seen in nature when stallions try to impress others. The Academic Art of Riding wants to develop the natural movement and talent of the horse to as high a level as possible under the rider.

**Elements of passage**

In passage, six elements need to be adjusted in relation to each other:

1. Balance
2. Suppleness
3. Shape
4. Tempo
5. Tact (Regularity and Rhythm)
6. Swing

A horse that is in balance (1.) and has become supple in his muscles through straightness training (2. Suppleness) can take the proper soft and giving posture (3. Shape). The horse bends in its haunches and pushes in a way that it can find the right speed (4. tempo) and can move with a regular rhythm (5. tact) forward-upwards. In the end, the horse shows the looseness and movement in his swinging back (6. Swing).

Teaching the exercise to the horse

If you have never ridden a passage before, make sure you find an experienced horse to learn it on. After mastering this forward-upwards feeling, you can teach it to your own horse. As a preparation, the rider can first ride transitions from piaffe into a forward going trot. Then the rider asks to go forward from piaffe in a more upward manner. This is how the passage should be developed. In time, the movements will become more perfect and more beautiful.

Aids

During the passage, the seat of the rider and back of the horse melt together. The seat of the rider follows the swinging in the horse's back and the back of the horse forms around the soft seat of the rider. Imagine your seat is a hand and the back of the horse is a ball:

- You can bounce the ball onto the same place: this is comparable to piaffe.
- One can bounce the ball forward with power into a strong trot.
- You can also bounce forward slowly with more swinging in which the ball bounces higher. This is passage.

The aids are:

- The rider should first make a piaffe and feel which hind leg is in the air and which hind leg is on the ground.
- The rider adds a slight forward and every time a hind leg steps forward, the calf of the rider asks the horse to bring that hind leg more forward.
- The rider asks a bit more swinging from his pelvis, without losing the rhythm (without losing the ball).
- With an inner metronome the rider maintains regularity and rhythm. In the beginning, the rider can help the horse by clacking his tongue.
- The rider maintains the suppleness and softness.

Variations

The passage can be improved with the following variations:

- Transitions piaffe – passage. This increases the control over carrying and pushing.
- Transitions passage – extended trot. This increases the forward movement and the flight moment.
- Turns and serpentines in passage. This enhances a more round movement and bending in the front legs.
- All side movements in passage. This also enhances a more round movement and bending in the front legs. It also stimulates the proper activity in the hind legs.

16. LEVADE



High School

The piaffe, passage en pirouette are famous exercises from the High School. These exercises are part of the schools on the ground. Courbette, croupade, ballotade and capriole are part of the schools above the ground and are also called school jumps.

The levade is the connection between the exercises on the ground and the exercises above the ground. All exercises are part of the Academic Art of Riding and are derived from the natural movements of the horse.

History

The High School exercises were already used in ancient Greece to show the skills of horse and rider and in times of war, the exercises were used as defense. In the 17th and 18th century, the exercises were further developed as an art form.

At the end of the 18th century, the armies of Napoleon made the baroque glory come to an end. For a long time, the High School jumps were only performed in the two big riding schools in Vienna and Saumur.

Later on, they were also performed in the younger (20th century) schools in Portugal and Spain.

Definition

In the levade the horse carries 100% of its weight on the hindquarter, in which it bends its hind legs equally in the same moment. The back makes an angle of about 35 degrees and the wither remains at the same height as when standing with a maximum of a hand width higher or lower.

The horse folds its front legs under its body and remains in this position for 2 or 3 seconds. The hind legs are not supposed to be placed wide and/or uneven (one hind leg further forward than the other).



Because of the greater bending, the levade is more difficult than the pesade.

The pesade is an exercise in which the horse has an angle of 45 degrees or more. In pesade, the horse raises itself, while in the levade the horse bends through its haunches and "sits down".

In the mezair, the front legs are folded less under the body.

Goal

The levade is the starting position for the school jumps and shows whether the piaffe was taught to the horse correctly.

The levade contributes to making the hindquarter more powerful and bendable. Also, levade is the perfect check whether the horse is trained straight.

A crooked horse can do the levade to the left, for example, but not to the right.

Teaching the levade to the horse

First, the levade in hand is taught to the horse. The rider asks a piaffe in place. Then the horse is asked to put more and more weight on the hind legs, so that first one front leg is lifted and then, when the horse feels balanced and comfortable, the other front leg is also lifted.

When the horse responds by accident the first time and lifts himself a little bit, the exercise should be stopped for that day and the horse should be rewarded thoroughly.

In the beginning, the horse only needs to stay in this positing for a short time.

The stronger the horse becomes, the more it will bend its hind legs and the more it will “sit down” and fold its front legs under its body.



Aids

The exercise is started in hand from piaffe in place. By clocking the tongue and asking the hind legs to step further under, the horse is invited to bring 100% of its weight on the hind legs.

The rider can assist by touching the dock of the tail with the whip or to touch the hind legs to make them bend more under the point of weight. It is important that the rider does not try to lift the head, but keeps asking it forward down.



When the horse can do a levade in hand, the exercise can be done in riding:

The rider starts from piaffe in place and places the hind legs forward under the point of weight. The rider clocks his tongue and makes half halts.

The rider focuses on a spot right in front of then at his eyes-height to help keep his body vertical and not lean forward while doing the exercise. After levade, the horse is asked to go forward-down in a relaxed walk.

In a later stage of training, transitions from levade to piaffe are asked.

17. TERRE Á TERRE

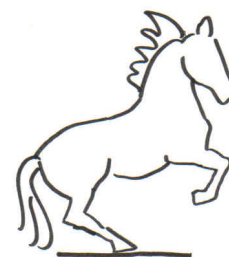
History

In the medieval times, terre á terre was the gait of the fight, in which the horse was most maneuverable to go into charge. In Renaissance and Baroque times, the exercise was used to make the horse more maneuverable.

In terre á terre, the horse is free to move into any direction the rider wishes, to attack or avoid the opponent. The horse moves like a boxer or tennis player who is also in motion before he makes an attack or returns a ball. The rider is so moveable in terre á terre that it almost seems as if the rider is moving on his own feet. This exercise is shown on many ancient paintings and many people believe that old painters did not know how a horse moved. But nothing is further from the truth. Nowadays, hardly anybody can ride this exercise, which makes the images in the pictures look strange to us.

Goal

Terre à terre was once the ultimate goal of the academic art of riding, because the horse was then ready to be used in armed battle. With increased maneuverability, the rider had better chances of surviving the battle. This gait is still sometimes used in bull fighting to outmaneuver the bull. The exercise is also used as a preparation to the capriole.



Definition

Terre à terre is like the levade, a step between the schools on the ground (like piaffe, passage) and the school jumps (like courbette, capriole). According to the definition of the Duke of Newcastle (1592 – 1676), Terre à terre is a two-boated canter on two tracks.



The exercise consists of a series of small, low jumps. The movement is as following:

1. In the first phase, the horse lifts both front legs simultaneously and puts them down.
 2. In the second phase, the hind legs closes simultaneously to the front legs.
- Then the horse repeats this a few times.

The movement can be done in place, forwards, sideward, in a 180 degree turn and backwards. The horse can canter backwards using the backwards terre à terre.

Teaching the exercise to the horse

A horse must be extremely muscular and supple to be able to do this exercise. The horse must also have good coordination and have a powerful, supple hindquarter. The exercise can be taught in two ways:

1. By collecting and straightening out the horse in canter.
2. By making a series of levades.



The exercise can first be trained in hand and later under the rider.

When the horse responds by accident the first time, the exercise should be stopped for that day and the horse should be rewarded thoroughly.

It takes a long time (several years) until the horse can perform a fluent terre à terre as a two-beated canter.

Aids

The rider rides this combat gait one-handed, holding the reins in the left hand. With the other hand he holds the whip (in the past he held his weapon). The rider first asks the horse into levade. Then the rider drives the hind legs forward in the moment the front legs are put down. To prevent the horse from raising in the front, the rider keeps his left hand as low as possible. An independent seat is a requirement not to lose balance during the short and fast jumps.

Variations

- Redopp: A different two-beat canter is called the redopp. The front legs jump forward simultaneously, followed by a jump of both hind legs in a sideward movement.
- School canter: Many horses will lean towards a four-beated canter in Terre à Terre in place, thus creating the School canter.
- Carrière: The carrière is an exercise looking like a Terre à Terre. Imagine how a racing horse comes out of the starting-box.

The carrière was mainly used in man against man fights to attack the opponent. It was only when the horse pushed powerfully with the hind legs that the rider could attack, otherwise he would lose balance and fall off the horse.

In ancient time, riders also practiced with rings. The ring was only valid when the rider had stuck his spear through the ring in the moment the horse had both hind legs on the ground.

Terre à terre is a good foundation for the School jumps.

18. JUMPS ABOVE THE GROUND

The jumps above the ground, also called School jumps, are like all other exercises derived from natural movements of the horse. The horse can also show these movements in the field and in the herd to lose energy, impress others or maintain the hierarchy. Every jump, whether natural, or a jump across a fence or a school jump, starts with raising the front. In a natural jump, the raising of the front, the push, the stretching and the landing melt together fluently.



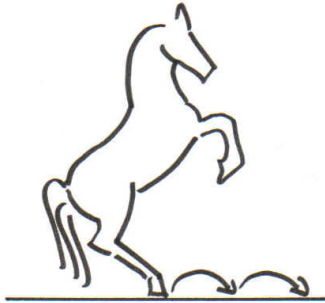
In comparison, these phases are clearly distinguishable in the School jumps. The raising of the front itself is already a separate exercise called *pesade*. Out of this, the jump can be made: the horse is encouraged to jump with his entire weight off the ground and bring all four legs in the air.

History

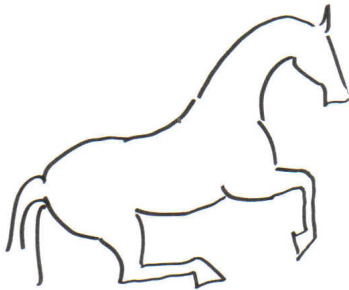
School jumps were done in ancient times to present the rider and horse. In times of war, they were used as means to defend. When the horse mastered the *courbette*, the rider could use the horse as a shield and open an attack forward at the same time. When the horse mastered the *capriole*, he could also defend itself from behind. In the Baroque times these jumps were further developed as an art form.

Definition

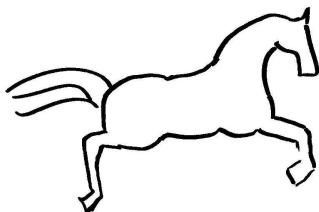
Prior to a School jump, the horse carries all its weight on the hind legs. Then the weight is moved upwards by the hind legs. There are four School jumps:

Courbette

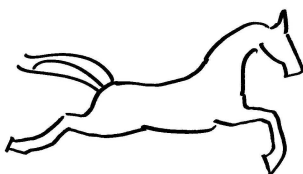
The courbette starts with a pesade after which the horse jumps forward several steps on its hind legs. An experienced horse can do multiple jumps without landing on the front legs in between jumps.

Croupade

In croupade, the horse can push with its hind legs so powerfully that its “croupe” comes near the same height (horizontal line) as the withers. The horse does not jump forward, like in courbette, but upwards.

Ballotade

From croupade, the horse can be asked to kick out with its hind legs. When it lacks power to kick out completely and only shows the soles of its hind feet, we call it a ballotade.

Capriool

When the hind legs kick out completely we call it a capriole. This is the most difficult of all jumps and is the crown to the Academic Art of Riding.

Asymmetry

It is necessary that both hind legs move simultaneously and identically in both carrying and pushing manner while doing School jumps. Only few horses have two symmetrical hind legs. Most horses tend to put less weight on one hind leg and move the stronger hind leg further forward.

It is important for the rider to recognize this asymmetry from the beginning of the training. By training the horse straight, the weak hind leg can be made stronger so that the horse is later capable of using both hind legs equally.

School above the ground

The horse must be able to master collected canter, Terre à Terre and levade perfectly before teaching it the jumps. These exercises should be practiced in left- and right bending and on the straight central line to create a strong hindquarter.



Step 1

To teach a jump, a levade in hand is first asked. Only when the front is lifted correctly and straight, can a straight jump arise.

Step 2

From levade, the hindquarter is encouraged with an energetic aid to jump off the ground. A response, however small, is rewarded greatly and the training should be stopped immediately after the first few times.

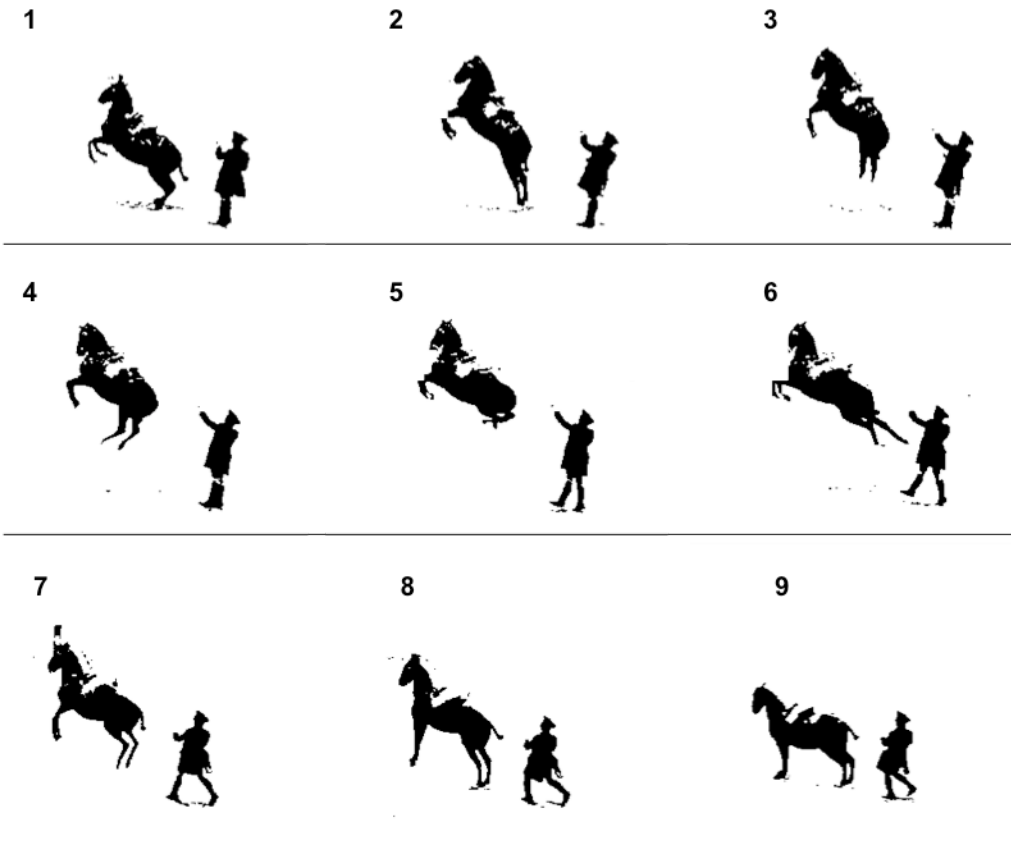
Step 3

When the horse is confident in courbette, the horse is then capable of pushing its body from the ground more powerfully. The horse is encouraged to jump more upwards to reach a horizontal line in the body. This can create a croupade or ballotade.

Step 4

A horse with the right mental and physical abilities will show capriole-like jumps during its training. With additional years of training, a horse like this can become a true "caprioleur". A horse that mastered the capriole perfectly has finished the entire Academic schooling as it is the final and most difficult exercise.

In the landing both (8) hind legs are supposed to land first to catch the weight of the body with flexibility and prevent the front legs from an overload of pressure.



Here ends this series of 18 parts of the academic art of riding, covering all exercises from training the young horse up to school jumps. For the average recreational riding, these school jumps are probably out of reach. However, the basic exercises are within reach for everybody and they lead to an obeying, mentally relaxed and physically fit horse. They lead to a beautiful horse that can perform in the art of riding easily, comfortably and with enjoyment until a high age.

Good luck!

Marijke de Jong

Check out <http://www.AcademicArtOfRiding.com> for more information!

Free online video's:

Marijke de Jong manages the following You Tube channels and places new films regularly:

<http://www.youtube.com/user/RidingAcademy>
<http://www.youtube.com/user/PaardenBegrijpen>

Follow Marijke de Jong on Twitter:

<http://twitter.com/RidingAcademy>

Home Study Course Straightness Training:

Free videos and more information about Straightness Training you find at:

http://straightness-training.kajabi.com/funnel_events/4206

Translation by Ylvie Fros

- <http://twitter.com/YlvieFros>
- <http://www.ylviefros.nl>



- ☒ This course reveals all the information about **Natural Asymmetry** and **Straightness Training**
- ☒ It reveals the **8 dimensions asymmetry** of the horse and the consequences and problems are described
- ☒ You'll get access to the **6 keys of straightness training** to make your horse stronger and more supple
- ☒ You will get **more insight** in how riding problems originate and in how to fix and to prevent these problems
- ☒ You'll discover the **3 ways of training** professional trainers use to straighten their horses.
- ☒ You will discover the **principles** to achieve a light, obedient, confident & calm horse that is a pleasure to ride

<http://straightness-training.kajabi.com/>